

Message Text

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14

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 AGR-05 FRB-03

TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 OMB-01 STR-04 CEA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9131

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TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PE

SUBJECT: STRIKES AND PROTESTS SPREAD TO PROVINCIAL CITIES

REF: LIMA 1983

SUMMARY: WHILE NATIONAL BANK WORKERS AND CALLAO UNIONS ENDED THEIR 48-HOURS STRIKES ON SCHEDULE MARCH 3, OTHER PROTEST ACTIONS WERE INITIATED IN AREQUIPA, AYACUCHO AND TRUJILLO. THESE LIMITED-DURATION PROTESTS ARE BEING USED BY VARIOUS INTERESTS TO BRING PRESSURE UPON THE GOP, WHICH IS RESPONDING BY ACCUSING THE WORKERS OF IMPAIRING THE ECONOMY BUT BY GIVING IN ON A FEW SELECTED ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

1. PERU'S BANKS AND MAIN PORT OF CALLAO RETURNED TO NORMAL MARCH 3, WHILE THE COUNTRY'S SECOND CITY OF AREQUIPA WAS REPORTEDLY "PARALYZED"

BY A GENERAL STRIKE OF INDEFINITE DURATION. BY MARCH 3 THE LIMA PRESS CHANGED ITS DESCRIPTION OF THE SOUTHERN CITY AS "COMPLETELY TRANQUIL", AND NOW CONCEDES THAT THE SITUATION IS STILL FAR FROM NORMAL. THE BI-NATIONAL CENTER DIRECTOR IN AREQUIPA REPORTS THAT THE

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EFFECT OF THE GENERAL STRIKE HAS INCREASED OVER THE LAST

24 HOURS WITH MOST SHOPS CLOSED AND POLICE PATROLS MUCH IN EVIDENCE.

2. THE CABINET IS CONSIDERING THE DEMANDS OF THE AREQUIPA FEDERATION OF WORKERS (CGTP-AFFILIATED), ALTHOUGH THE ISSUES ARE SEVERAL AND NOT AMENABLE TO QUICK RESOLUTION. THE AREQUIPA GENERAL STRIKE BEGAN WITH TRANSPORT WORKERS UNHAPPY OVER WORKING CONDITIONS. THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN CONSIDERABLE POPULAR SUPPORT FOR A GENERAL STRIKE BECAUSE THE GOP RECENTLY FORCED AN INCREASE IN LOCAL BUS FARES FROM 3.7 SOLES TO 4.5 SOLES SO THAT THE PROVINCIAL TARIFF WOULD CONFORM WITH PRICES IN LIMA. THE CGTP, WHICH IS STONG IN THE REGION, PROMPTLY ALIGNED ITS TOTAL STRENGTH BEHIND THE STRIKE WITH ITS USUAL CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT-DECREED WAGE RESTRAINTS, DETENTION WITHOUT FORMAL CHARGES OR TRIALS OF KEY UNION ADVISORS, AND ALLEGED ANTI-LABOR ACTIVITIES OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

3. A FURTHER CGTP STRIKE, THIS ONE SPECIFCALLY FOR 48 HOURS, BEGAN MARCH 3 IN THE COUNTRY'S THIRD CITY, TRUJILLO. LEFTIST DAILY EXPRESO REPORTS THAT 25,000 WORKERS ARE INVOLVED AND THAT TRUJILLO IS PARALYZED. THE STRIKE WAS CALLED TO DAMAGE THE "PRO-IMPERIALIST" APRA AND TO PROTEST THE "ANTIWORKER POLICY OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR". THE NUMBERS AND IMPACT OF THIS STRIKE ARE CONSIDERABLY LESS BECAUSE THE CGTP IS A RELATIVELY MINOR UNION FORCE IN TRUJILLO WHERE THE APRA-ORIENTED CTP PREDOMINATES.

4. AYACUCHO WAS ALSO THE SITE THE PAST 48 HOURS OF A GENERAL PROTEST. THIS ONE WAS SUPPORTED BY ALL SECTORS OF THE CITY AGAINST A GOP DECISION NOT TO NAME AYACUCHO AS A REGIONAL CAPITAL UNDER THE NEW PRIVINCIAL REORGANIZATION PLAN. THE GOP GAVE WAY AND MARCH 2 ANNOUNCED AYACUCHO WOULD IN FACT BECOME A REGIONAL CAPITAL.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE GOP CANNOT OR WILL NOT FOR ITS OWN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REASONS DO MUCH ABOUT THE DEMANDS BEING REGISTERED THROUGH THESE STRIKES, MANY OF WHICH ARE PRIMARILY PROPAGANDA-SCORING ANYWAY, THERE IS AMPLE INDICATION THAT MORALES BERMUDEZ AND THE CABINET ARE ABSORBED WITH THE SITUATION. ACYACUCHO AND AREQUIPA STRIKES ARE ALSO REMINDERS ONCE AGAIN THAT GENRAL UNHAPPINESS, NOT EXCLUSIVELY WORKER-RELATED, OVER NATIONALPOLICY CAN BE REGISTERED NOTWITHSTANDING THE ABSENCE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NORMAL PARTICIPATORY POLITICS.
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